

Email of September 18, 2009 from Melanie Larch, WVDHHR
Recent outreach efforts

Barb & Walt,

Here are some pictures of our security/emergency response exhibit at this year's WVRWA Conference (see attached).

Overall, this year's event was a **very** positive experience. I took 1,000 of the 2,500 "Warning" decals we received last Friday. Of that amount, we gave away 698 to representatives from various water systems. They were very enthusiastic about the decals and said they would put them to good use.

We also gave 100 decals (note: that's included in the 698 count) to Mike Hersman. Mike is one of WVRWA's Circuit Riders and he covers a 20 county area throughout the state. Bob and I have worked with him before on various security/emergency response projects. He

Several of them told me that they have our "Warning" signs posted around their facilities and they've been effective in deterring tampering, vandalism, etc. About 5 or 6 operators asked me if we had any of them available. I didn't take any of them since we had the decals, so I suggested they contact the district office serving their system. (All of the DO's received signs earlier this year when they were here for a Districts meeting.) I also told them that if the district office didn't have signs available, to contact us and we would help.

You'll notice in some of the photos that we had a special "Caution H1N1" graphic on our display. It caught the eye of many visitors who talked with us about this current health issue. We also had two handouts available relating to pandemic flu—the OEHS *Pandemic Influenza: A Guide for Water/Wastewater Systems* and an H1N1 information sheet written by Patti-Kay Wisniewski (EPA Region III). While the latter isn't an official EPA document, we had her permission to distribute it at this event. Copies were also distributed during Jeff and Bob's *Threat Preparedness and Emergency Response Revisited* presentation on Monday.

Since we only have 98 of the soap bars we purchased in 2007 left, we took half of those as part of our pandemic/H1N1 outreach. They were snapped up very quickly. Interestingly enough, several people who stopped by the exhibit wanted to know if "those were hand sanitizers" **or asked if we had hand sanitizers along with our other items.** Fairway Laboratories, another exhibitor, had a pocket spray hand sanitizer at their booth. Needless to say, it was a popular and timely item that people wanted. (I managed to get one for myself if you want to see it.)

When they asked if we had hand sanitizer (after the soap bars ran out), I explained we'd been unable to purchase any in time for the event.

Based on their comments and questions, H1N1 is a **serious** concern with these operators.

Wrapping up the handouts, we gave out 200 of our new message pens, as well as the plastic bags we've been using since 2004. (If we ever get rid of those, maybe we'll replace them with bags similar to the ones RTIA just got.)

I've also made a suggestion to Debbie Britt and Bonnie Serrett for next year's event and would like to hear your thoughts on this as well. While H1N1 may not be an issue next year, seasonal influenza always has an impact on the workforce. If the seasonal flu vaccine will be available by mid-September 2010 (9/12 – 9/15), maybe WVRWA could seek the assistance of the Pocahontas County Health Department to have a small flu shot clinic as part of next year's event. There's certainly a lot of logistics to consider (cost, number of personnel needed, what to do if someone experiences a serious reaction since the nearest hospitals are 45 – 60 minutes away, etc) but I think it would be a positive thing for everyone involved (BPH, WVRWA, and attendees).

All in all, I think our participation in this year's event was a great success. This is the sixth year we've done the security/emergency response exhibit and the response from the operators is always positive. They do put the things we've distributed over the years to use at their facilities and are always happy to see us there. It's nice for me to have some "face time" with these folks as well.

Let me know if you have any questions. Thanks.

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